



Using Our Senses

Did you know that every day since birth, your child has been growing and learning by using her senses? Your child has been using her sense of sight when she sees light coming in through a window. She has been using her sense of hearing when she listens to the sound of your voice. Your child will be using her senses when you and she try some of these fun *ParentTips*.

INFANT:

- Touch your child's nose and say, "You use your nose to smell." Touch your child's ear and say, "You use your ears to hear." Point to your child's eyes and say, "You use your eyes to see." Wiggle your child's fingers and say, "You use your fingers to touch." Point to your child's mouth and say, "You use your tongue to taste."

TODDLER:

- Find a small area in your home or outside where your child can get messy and have fun exploring materials. Fill a large plastic container with soapy water or sand. Put different sized bowls, plastic items, beach toys, etc. into the container. Your child can experience sorting, digging, and pouring.
- Teach your child early science skills by encouraging her to observe, compare and classify - to go beyond just "looking." Have your child describe, talk about, and draw to improve her observation skills, build vocabulary, and develop her understanding of the senses.

PRESCHOOLERS:

- Go on a "Texture Hunt." Help your child find different textures that are soft and hard, bumpy and smooth, hot and cold in your home. Let him be creative about finding textures: a bumpy sponge, a fuzzy towel, a soft pillow, a hard table. Have your child talk about and describe each texture. Ask: "What does this feel like to you?" "How is it different from the bumpy sponge? the hard table; the soft pillow?"
- Make "secret boxes" for your child to explore. Take three shoeboxes and cut a hand-sized hole in the side of each. Put a different item inside each box (a few round milk lids, some rectangular Legos™, some square bean bags). Have your child put his hand inside and touch the object without looking. Ask your child: What do you feel? What shape is it? What does it feel like? Can you guess what it is?

Book suggestions: *I Hear*. Helen Oxenbury. Candlewick Press, 1995
Horton Hears a Who! Dr. Seuss. Ransom House, 1968